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The Hon. Mark Raymond Speakman  
Minister for the Environment and Heritage,  
[office@speakman.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@speakman.minister.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Hon. Mark Speakman,

**Re: Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Review**

I write on behalf of The Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA), a not-for-profit, National Body, for the Recognition, Management, Preservation and Welfare of Australian Wild Horses (Brumbies). ABA member groups are skilled in gentling and rehoming Brumbies removed by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) passive trapping programs.

The ABA accepts that Brumby populations should be managed, to a viable, sustainable level, so that Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) ecology can remain seasonally robust.

For the past two years ABA members have given expert advice, joined review meetings and site visits with other stakeholders and provided several submissions to the NPWS Independent Technical Reference Group (ITRG) which makes recommendations to the Wild Horse Management Plan review. The issues involved are complex, emotive and wide ranging and a challenge to respectfully accommodate within one plan.

As such, NPWS views printed recently in the Sunday Telegraph *Time is running out for wild brumbies made famous by the Man From Snowy River movie* will, in our opinion, only inflame tensions and lower the chance of finding broader community consensus.

Comments by NPWS that *current trapping program are failing to keep numbers down* are, in fact, not consistent with their own raw data which shows that over five trapping years, horse density has decreased around 40% from 2.69 Brumbies per square km to 1.64 Brumbies per square km. [Submission to ITRG]

Voicing *concerns with the humaneness of passive trapping* raises questions about what other options NPWS are considering in the management review, such as aerial shooting. Passive trapping is the most humane first step in removing excess Brumbies. The second is for trapped Brumbies to be collected by people with skills in gentling and rehoming. If rehoming is not feasible, then yes, it is more humane to euthanize those remaining at the trap yard, rather than truck them long distances before being killed at an abattoir.

Claims that increasing populations *threaten native flora and fauna* are not in fact backed by any peer reviewed, scientific studies designed to assess and quantify all of the threats in KNP. Is it perhaps, that a highly visible Brumby is easier to blame?

Conversely, are less visible species such as; foxes, rabbits, cats, dogs, goats, deer, humans and climate change therefore not considered any threat to KNP ecology?

The ABA remains highly concerned that yet another management plan is being prepared without first conducting a science based, peer reviewed study to identify the number of sustainable, viable Brumbies able to live in a seasonally robust landscape. Until we have comprehensive, quantified management plan goals to work to, how can spending 3.3 million on reviews and removal programs reported in the newspaper be justified?

The ABA and many other groups, individuals and community voters have applauded The Hon. John Barilaro for rejecting aerial shooting and for recognising what many are convinced of, that is, our iconic Snowy Brumbies are strongly linked to our heritage.

If you visit KNP before the draft plan is released, per the media report, I urge you visit with people who will show you robust ecologies where Brumbies live, to then compare with Cowombat Flat where exclusion fences limit access to water for any fauna, hikers, 4WD vehicles and campers travelling on the nearby 4WD track from NSW to Victoria.

It seems un-professional for a government authority to broadcast views before releasing its own draft plan, or to take the risk of been accused of trying to bend public opinion towards a draft plan position that is yet to be released for community feedback.

It is the ABA's view that KNP can, and does, sustain environmentally sound landscapes in the 45% of the park where managed Brumbies live. Furthermore, if a horse presence is proved to be a threat to a sensitive area, as reported, we recommend that NPWS adopt New Zealand's way of maintaining a horse free exclusion zone around sensitive areas.

The ABA shares your view that there is a need to protect the park. However in addition to park flora and fauna, it is vital we also protect European as well as Aboriginal social history. Many overseas countries are now embracing the values that Wild Horses can provide by grazing in a well-managed and integrated conservation environmental plan.

The ABA would value your affirmation that Kosciuszko National Park is not just for one value set, but for all Australians and their many and varied interests. The ABA also asks you why NPWS have given their views on KNP management to the Sunday Telegraph well before their draft management plan is finished and released for comment.

Please contact me on 03-9328-4709, or email [pickjill@hotmail.com](mailto:pickjill@hotmail.com) if you would like to discuss any queries you may have from this letter.

I look forward to your earliest reply to our concerns.

Yours sincerely,



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Cc: The Hon. John Barilaro,  
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